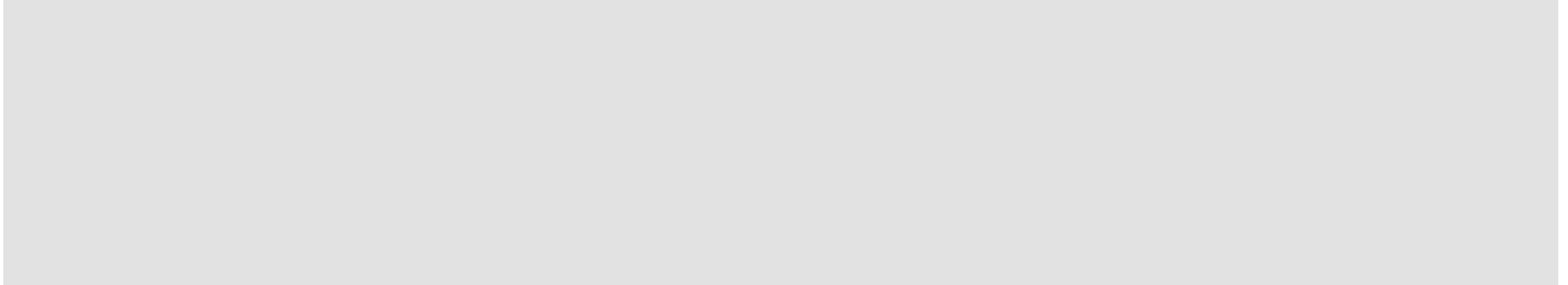


Online Interactions and Suicide – It's More Than Social Media

Rachel Larkin, MA, MSW, LCSW
Kirsten Robinette, OES Specialist



Hotline Services – We are here to listen

- Accredited by the American Association of Suicidology and Contact USA
- Local center for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- Free and confidential
- 24/7 phones: 301-738-2255, 1-800-273-TALK
- Text: noon-midnight 7 days 301-738-2255
- Chat: noon-midnight 7 days:

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>

* Suicide Attempt Survivor Support group (free)
supportgroup@every-mind.org

- Funded by Montgomery County, state of Maryland, and individual donors



The Culture of Youth



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Statistics

U.S.A. SUICIDE: 2017 OFFICIAL FINAL DATA

47, 173 total deaths attributed to suicide *

6, 252 15-24 years old

1,179, 325 attempts

One person dies by suicide every 11.1 minutes

One attempt every 27 seconds.

Leading cause of death for ages 15-24

#1 Accidents

#2 Suicide

#3 Homicide

78 Americans die from opioid overdoses every day.

117 Americans die by suicide every day.

So why aren't we talking about it?
#ItsMyBusiness

Always stay with someone who is in crisis.
If you or a friend is in danger, call the
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

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Kids in crisis

- The number of children and teens in the United States who visited emergency rooms for suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts *doubled* between 2007 and 2015
- The average age of a child at the time of evaluation was **13**, and 43% of the visits were in children between 5 and 11.
- From 2010- 2018 there was a **141%** increase in poisoning suicide attempts in girls 10-15 years old.¹



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ER visits for suicidality in children

Children ages 5-17 visited children's hospitals for suicidal thoughts or attempts about twice as often in 2015 as in 2008.

52% were aged 15-17

37% were aged 12-14

13% were aged 5-11

Visits peaked mid-fall and mid-spring, lowest in the summer

In 2015 in Montgomery County, there were more than 260 suicide attempt related ER visits for kids aged 6-18

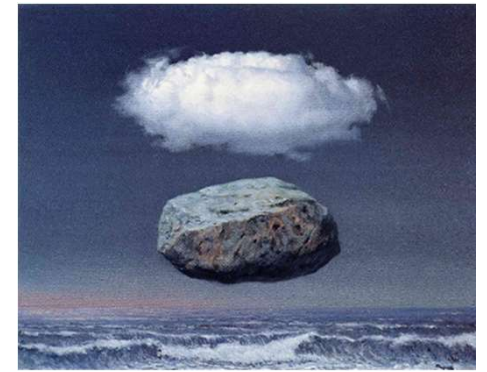
* more than 30% of these were elementary / middle school aged



Suicide in Young Children

- 100% of 3rd graders in a study had seen a suicide on TV
- 4th leading cause of death for children 8-12
- 29% of kids disclosed their intent to another person
- Study looking at suicide deaths in children *14 and under* found that
 - Most were male (76%)
 - Most died at home
 - ADD/ADHD most common diagnosis of these children and other disruptive disorders (not mood disorders)

*Programs that improve interpersonal problem solving skills help since relationship problems were the most common precipitator of suicidality in kids and teens



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A note about 13 Reasons Why

- The Netflix show “13 Reasons Why” was associated with a 28.9% increase in suicide rates among U.S. youth ages 10-17 in the month (April 2017) following the shows release, after accounting for ongoing trends in suicide rates.
- Very graphic depiction of a suicide.
- Boys impacted more than girls
- National Association of School Psychologists issued a [warning statement](#): "We do not recommend that vulnerable youth, especially those who have any degree of suicidal ideation, watch this series. Its powerful storytelling may lead impressionable viewers to romanticize the choices made by the characters and/or develop revenge fantasies," they said. "Suicide is not a solution to problems."
- *Have you asked your clients if they have watched?*



Meme Culture

An element of a culture or system of behavior that may be considered to be passed from one individual to another by nongenetic means, especially imitation. a humorous image, video, piece of text, etc., that is copied (often with slight variations) and spread rapidly by Internet users.

me explaining
my love for my
cat and how i
would die for him

my cat



9:47 PM - 26 May 2019

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TikTok

- TikTok comprises very popular, user generated short videos – usually lip syncs or pranks. 251.2 million monthly active users as of December 2018. Used to be called musical.ly
- In 2019 the FTC required that it pay a \$5.7 million fine for violating the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, which requires children under the age of 13 to gain parental consent before handing over their personal information to online services.
- TikTok users are overwhelmingly young — only a third are older than 30.



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Cringe Videos

- People watch them with an ironic sense of detachment, a sort of so-bad-they-can't-look-away magnetism that the internet calls “[cringe](#).”
- People make fun of the “stars” of the video – “digital schadenfreude”
- If people are mocking content, they are sharing it, which is good for the apps that they are on



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What is Online Gaming?

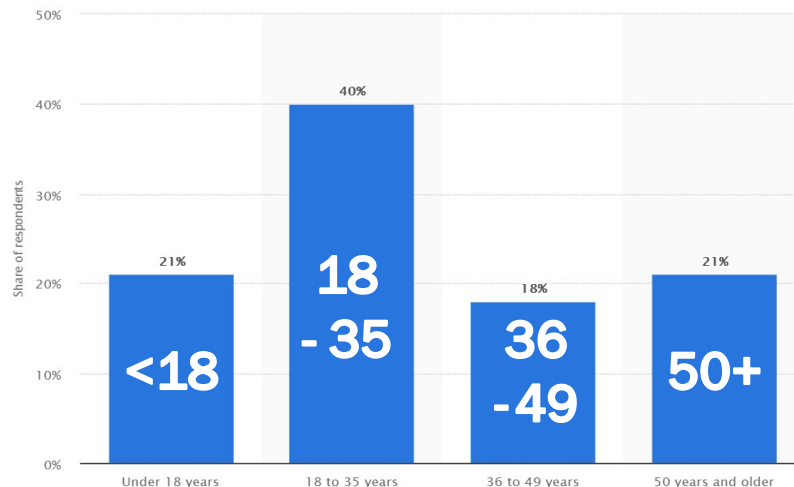
- Games connected to the internet
- Mobile Phones (iPhones, Android, etc), Computers, and consoles like Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo
- Communities tied to the game, including programs that lie outside the game itself



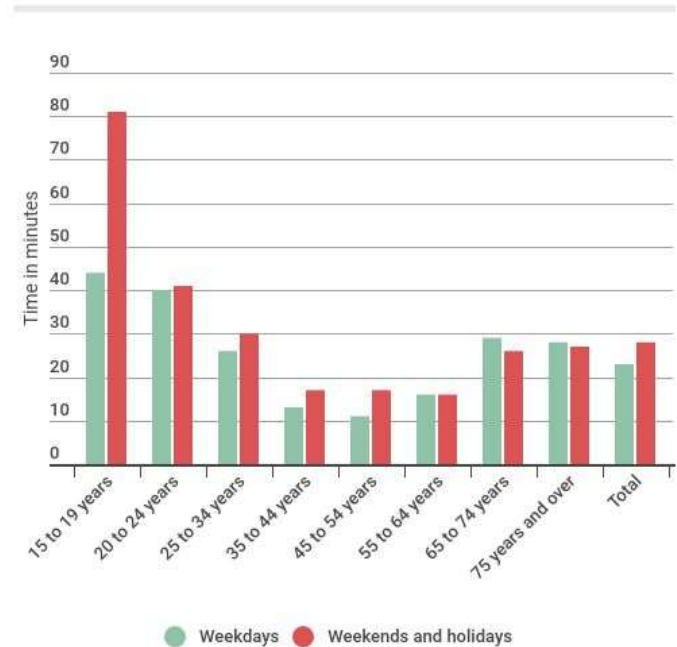
How Common is it?

- Online gaming growing
- Related media
- Popularity of interrelated media

Age breakdown of video game players in the United States in 2019



The Average Time Spent Playing Games and Leisure per Capita on Weekdays and Weekends/Holidays of Individuals in the U.S., in Minutes and by Age Group (2016)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Created by WePC.com

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- 15 million daily active users
- 2.2-3.2 million monthly broadcasters
- \$30 million+ raised for charity
- 21.32% of Twitch viewers come from the US
- 81.5% of Twitch users are male



- Live streaming platform

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shroud



LIVE



Follow



Subscribe



Stream Chat



XxBinT
5,000



INCIVIK
4,000



typical_santi
2,150



Firstmo0n: chat yall sluts for money



BullzaiFTW: @Mentalstatemike LOOOOOOL



Firstmo0n: monkaH



wava: @jcjoeyfreak,



savagedopepanda: llevel



StreamElements: @savagedopepanda,
shroud is level 44



chanticod4: monkaH



Bonesofdoom: Mega fat crits



panda_STI

Subscribed with Twitch Prime. They've subscribed
for 18 months!



panda_STI: dang. 18 months. you owe me
\$4.99 x18 months



jcjoeyfreak: twitch just gave me a notification
that shroud was live Weirdga



boybrid: lcharacter



Bonesofdoom:



Q IS HELL!! Orc Shaman @ Faerlina | @shroud on socials for updates

Category: World of Warcraft

English

MMORPG

RPG



17,884



350,742,525



Share



Why Focus on these Communities?

- Increase in discussion revolving around suicide and mental health on Twitch forums
- To the extent that Twitch created a help page
- Why this increase??

Suicide-Related Internet Use

- Positive?
- Negative?

Negatives to Suicide-Related Internet Use

- Suicide methods
- Vulnerable groups
- Studies have shown that while there are negatives, participants do not feel encouraged towards suicide

Positives to Suicide-Related Internet Use

- Promoting professional support
- Coping strategies
- Sharing stories
- Connection.

Connection to Online Communities (Twitch, Reddit, etc)

- People with serious mental illness are more interested in communicating online
- Online communities are easy to access
- Therapies where distraction is used to allow client to open up
- Free.

Screen time and depression – it depends...

- Researchers followed 4,000 kids aged 12- 16 for four years and found:
 - as little as a one-hour annual increase in social media or television viewing was associated with more severe depressive symptoms and lower self-esteem.
 - But video gaming and computer use were not associated with gains in these areas
 - For those in the study who were prone to higher levels of depression, as social media use went up, so did their symptoms.

JAMA Pediatrics 7.15.19

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Practical Applications

- Utilization of online forums for group therapy
- Utilization of sites such as Twitch to reach a wider audience
- Collaboration of Twitch and therapists
- If kids won't stay off their screens, there should be options that do not increase depressive symptoms
- Online therapy!

Afterthoughts

- Online \neq offline
- Hugely under-researched
 - Video game research is often focused on violence and coordination rather than social aspects
 - Research is about 15 years behind on Twitch...
 - High male presence in online communities

Questions?

- Thank you for joining us!